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Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson. The Correspondence of Emerson and Carlyle. Edited by Joseph Slater. New York. Columbia University Press. 1964. 622 pp. $10.00.

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important modern thinkers on ethical and economic matters are not brought forward for comparison, though some of the more favourable modern critics of Smith are cited, especially when their views support Dr. Fulton's own interpretation. Perhaps one expects too much from a generally modest task of this kind: but when one meets the conclusion at page 102, that Smith's approach is to be described as "a deistically flavoured ethical theism of Christian orientation," one might be tempted to imagine, had one not read the previous hundred pages, that one had been led through a profound and subtle analysis of a great thinker: and that would not be the case. The theme is greater than the book, which remains at the level of the popular expository sermon.

Casual slips occur at p. 30, where 1864 should be 1764, and at p. 76, note 83, where "order of mean" should obviously read "order of men."

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Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson. *The Correspondence of Emerson and Carlyle.* Edited by Joseph Slater. New York. Columbia University Press. 1964. 622 pp. $10.00.

When Charles Eliot Norton published his edition of the correspondence of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Thomas Carlyle in 1883, the book won immediate fame which has lasted through the years. The edition, however, had peculiarities and deficiencies which have become more egregious with the passage of time. Norton, working quickly, did not find or publish all of the letters in the correspondence, nor did he include either an informative introduction or an adequate number of explanatory annotations. Furthermore, he made deletions and excisions where he thought such were necessary, and even made minor changes in style and punctuation. The demanding task of re-editing this important correspondence for the modern reader has now been admirably performed by Professor Slater, who is chairman of the Department of English at Colgate University. The 232 letters in his volume exceed by forty-one the number of letters included in Norton's last edition of 1899. Han-

dling the letters "as if they were sacred scripture," Professor Slater has accurately transcribed every jot and tittle with no exclusions, alterations, or "improvements" of the text. With equally reverent fidelity, he has thoroughly annotated each letter—a task made staggering by the profusion of allusions and quotations made by both writers. His notes are invaluable, for they go beyond mere identification of names and references to supply the reader with appropriate historical and biographical information that adds greatly to our understanding of the work. Especially valuable are the many notes which cite pertinent passages from other letters written by Carlyle and Emerson, as well as notes directing the reader to enlightening secondary sources which add scope to his knowledge.

The most gratifying aspect of Professor Slater's edition, however, is his introduction. Written with erudition, grace, and clarity, it traces the wavering course of Emerson's friendship with Carlyle from the momentous meeting of the two young men in 1833 to the mellow moment of their last parting in 1872. This vivid and contiguous narrative is extremely effective, for it makes the reader *feel* the presence of these two awesome personalities, in many ways antithetical to each other, yet linked in deeper bonds of friendship over a widening gulf of years and miles. As a result, their letters evoke the immediacy of human life as few other letters can. The introduction also contains a thorough history of previous editions, and an explanation of the "bibliopoly" and problems of commercial publishing which enter into so many of the earlier letters, since Emerson was frequently the agent who guided Carlyle's books through the hazardous process of American publication. Finally, it concludes with a section entitled "The Art of the Letters"—a brilliant discussion of "the light which the letters throw on the mind and the face of the past and . . . the value which they may themselves possess as literature." Here, Professor Slater is able to demonstrate what the reader soon discovers for himself—that these letters are indeed valuable in themselves, both as a document for the study of nineteenth-century life and thought, and as a coherent collection of writings which display the stylistic virtues (and sins) of both Carlyle and Emerson. There are passages of genius throughout—vivid descriptions of English and American scenes, word-portraits of contemporaries done with matchless skill (especially by Carlyle), flashes of keen, allusive humor, spurts of Carlylean bile or Emersonian pensiveness, and a warm dramatic quality which unifies all the letters and gives them a structure which is, as Professor Slater indicates, not unlike an epistolary novel.

It is, after all, the literary value of these letters which justifies this new edition. In Norton's day, they could be read by thousands of admirers as the wise communications of two Sages who were revered for their wisdom, or as the fertile dialogue of two Great Men who were even more interesting than the literature they created. Today, however, the letters must appeal to readers who examine Transcendentalism (or any "first philosophy") with analytic coolness; who regard biography as, at best, of secondary value in the process of evaluating any work of art; and who, as the result of our century's psychological sophistication and bewildering disillusionment, no longer revere any author as a Sage or Great Man—are, in fact, suspicious of greatness or sagacity in any form. The letters thus must have permanent literary and dramatic value if they are to survive the tides of taste that time brings. And these letters do have such value. Although they are at times disappointing because of their concern over mundane topics and their somewhat formal and reticent tone, they are worthy of the highest praise. Emerson's letters, at first somewhat stiff and self-conscious, soon become more flexible and relaxed in tone. His quietly graceful and imaginative style reveals his genius well, with an intimate voice rarely heard in his famed essays. Carlyle's letters, from first to last, are typical of the colorful and emphatic style for which he is famous, and are therefore equally delightful.

But style is not all. In letters, even more than in personal essays, success depends upon the personality which the style reveals, and the greatness of character which both Carlyle and Emerson possessed has never been more strongly displayed than in these letters. Here, those who have already met Emerson through the medium of his journals or Ralph Rusk's admirable work will find still more to strengthen their admiration; but even those who are meeting Emerson for the first time will be fascinated by the man they find in these pages. For here is a man in whom immense warmth and kindness are balanced by reason and self-control: whose courage and tenacity are unobtrusively veiled by understatement and serenity; whose quiet sense of humor tempers his serious cast of mind; and whose acute attenuation to the realities of daily life is as infectious as his devotion to the ideal. Surely such a man can never fail to find us.

As for Carlyle, the man seen in these letters may well be new and surprising to many readers. Unlike Emerson, he has not been accorded the extensive scholarly attention he deserves. There is still no comprehensive critical biography of him, and the two "standard" ones by D. A. Wilson and J. A. Froude present fragmentary or distorted views of his personality. Careless acquaintance with the temperament found in Car-

lyle's works is also apt to be misleading. As a result, many readers think of him only as a gruff, short-tempered, and fiercely confident authoritarian—a big-fisted advocate of stringent moral law who effortlessly hurls verbal fireballs upon an unrepentant populace, like a solitary Jeremiah. These letters, however, allow us to see past the *persona* of the prophet into the real nature of the man, and the insight is rewarding. By reading his comments to Emerson about the writing of such works as *The French Revolution, Latter-Day Pamphlets,* and *Frederick the Great,* we discover that his famous "spontaneous" style is far from effortless. It was, in fact, the fruit of agonizing years of labor and psychic turmoil, made all the more bitter by self-doubts and physical pain. We discover also that beneath Carlyle's solitary independence there lie both the need and the capacity for making and keeping friends. Emerson was actually one of many close friends Carlyle had, but even the record of this single friendship is revealing. That these two antipodal personalities could preserve mutual amenities over such a span of years is, as these letters show, due in no small part to Carlyle's surprising ability to exercise tact, tolerance, and self-deprecation when dealing with Emerson. This is seen especially well in the letters of the early 1850's, written after Emerson's second trip to England had caused a delicate but deep breach in the relationship between the two men. Recognizing the "deep cleft" that divided them, Carlyle wrote to Emerson that he could also see "where the rock-strata, miles deep, unite again," and he added characteristically:

> Nay if there were no point of agreement at all, and I were more intolerant of "ways of thinking" than I even am,—yet has not the man Emerson, from old years, been a Human Friend to me? Can I ever forget, or think otherwise than lovingly of the man Emerson?

Here and elsewhere, he was a man of many faults, but he was aware of them and would not allow them to ruin the sub-structure of sincere affection that he and Emerson had built.

The letters also reveal two other aspects of Carlyle's character which are frequently veiled by his "public" style—his perpetual sense of humor and his deep sense of sadness. These two qualities seem to be contradictory, but they are synthesized in Carlyle's complex personality. Many times one hears his voice sincerely lamenting the condition of both himself and England, and these lamentations in turn become the source of the desperate indignation which so pervades Carlyle's style. Yet it is also important to note that the tone of this indignation is one of humorous exaggeration—for Carlyle viewed both his own sorrows and

the world's with a sympathetic sense of humor which was Rabelaisian in its perspective. The wise Emerson immediately detected this ironic ambivalence of tone, and his description of Carlyle, written after reading *The French Revolution* in 1837, offers us the best summary of its effect. "I think you a very good giant;" he wrote to Carlyle, "disporting yourself with an original and vast ambition of fun; pleasure and peace not being strong enough for you, you choose to suck pain also, and teach fever and famine to dance and sing." It is this complex combination of gloom with humor, and erascibility with kindliness, which makes Carlyle so starkly arresting a personality. And this is the Carlyle who can be seen so well in his letters to Emerson.

Professor Slater's edition is valuable and rewarding for many reasons, but it is perhaps most valuable as a revivifying contribution to Carlyle scholarship. It is the first of a long-needed series of works which will present and appraise Carlyle in the light of modern criticism. As a result of the responsible devotion heralded by Professor Slater's excellent work, our generation may well see Carlyle whole, and it is probable that future generations will revere him as one of the masters of epistolary literature.

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